

Message Text

PAGE 01 SINGAP 01652 230348Z

17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-02

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07

FMC-01 CG-00 OFA-01 DLOS-03 /069 W

----- 000049

R 230255Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2388

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CANBERRA 842

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1652

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: MARR, SN, NZ

SUBJECT: USN ACCESS TO NAVAL STORES BASIN AND FUEL DEPOT IN SINGAPORE

1. IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH PM LEE, HE MENTIONED HIS DISCUSSION OF ABOVE SUBJECT WITH PM ROWLING IN WELLINGTON. HE SAID THEY WERE BOTH PUZZLED BY PROPOSAL TO SET ASIDE TWO BERTHS EXCLUSIVELY FOR NAVAL USE SINCE THERE SEEMED TO BE LITTLE PROSPECT THAT COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD USE THE FACILITIES (NZ, AUSTRALIA, UK AND US) WOULD MAKE SUFFICIENT USE OF THEM. SINGAPORE CANNOT AFFORD, HE SAID, TO HAVE THESE BERTHS UNDER-UTILIZED SINCE THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF COMMERCIAL BERTHING SPACE. HE SAID IF WE SAW POLITICAL OR OTHER ADVANTAGES IN DEALING THROUGH THE NEW ZEALANDERS HE WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THAT SO LONG AS IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT WHEN THE BERTHS WERE NOT REQUIRED FOR NAVAL USE, SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD OR SOME OTHER FIRM COULD MAKE USE OF THE SPACE.

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PAGE 02 SINGAP 01652 230348Z

2. I WAS UNABLE TO PIN PM DOWN ON PRECISE KIND OF ARRANGEMENT HE WOULD FIND ACCEPTABLE, BUT IT WOULD APPEAR HE COULD LIVE WITH AN ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY WE WOULD DEAL WITH THE NEW ZEALANDERS ON SHIP VISITS AND

WOULD HAVE PRIORITY ACCESS TO THE BERTHS, SO LONG AS SEMBAWANG OR OTHERS COULD USE BERTHS AT OTHER TIMES. WHETHER NEW ZEALAND WOULD ACTUALLY MANAGE THE BERTHS OR SIMPLY HAVE A CERTAIN PRIOR CLAIM TO THEM IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR. AS A MATTER OF FACT, WHILE THE BRITISH HAVE MANAGED THESE BERTHS, THEY HAVE ALWAYS MADE BERTHS AVAILABLE TO COMMERCIAL FIRMS WHEN NOT REQUIRED BY THE VARIOUS NAVIES. WHAT PM SEEMS TO BE SUGGESTING IS PRECISELY THAT, ONLY UNDER NEW ZEALAND RATHER THAN BRITISH CONTROL. IN ANY CASE, IT APPEARS THAT THE GOS WOULD BE WILLING TO WORK OUT AN ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD SATISFY OUR NEEDS. THE MAIN QUESTION IS WHETHER NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT IS INTERESTED.

3. THAT IS A RATHER LARGE QUESTION. NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSIONERS PEREN HAS TOLD ME THAT ROWLING, AFTER DISCUSSING WITH LEE THE IDEA OF USN USING THE FORMER ANZUK BERTHING FACILITIES UNDER NEW ZELAND MANAGEMENT, SAID " NEW ZEALAND WOULD NOT WANT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT EVEN IF APPROVED BY THE GOS".

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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